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In-depth evaluation of the global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, and paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and offices. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its recommendations.

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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the global development trends, issues and policies and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions

Summary

The present report reviews the work of the subprogrammes of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions. After revision of the medium-term plan, in 1998, the subprogramme, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, was discontinued. Its activities, integrated into other subprogrammes, are reviewed according to the revised structure of the medium-term plan.

Under the subprogrammes reviewed, and the activities within other subprogrammes, analysis of socio-economic development trends, issues and policies is carried out. The results of this analysis are presented in recurrent publications, mainly the annual economic and social surveys and a number of topical reports, studies and discussion papers. Under most subprogrammes, operational activities that are complementary to research and analytical work are also undertaken. The need to achieve an integrated approach to economic and social development is taken into account in the planning of activities.

The main findings of the in-depth evaluation are presented in section III (global programmes) and section IV (regional programmes) of the present report. Section V elaborates common issues of programme implementation, highlighting good practices in a number of units. In section VI, recommendations are made to enhance the contribution of the economic and social surveys to intergovernmental processes, improve the interaction between analytical functions and operational activities at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, develop the collaboration between the different subprogrammes throughout the Secretariat and promote higher visibility for the results of analytical work.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that an in-depth evaluation of global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies (subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001), and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions, be prepared for consideration by the Committee in 2000 (A/52/16, para. 306).

2. In its recommendation, the Committee noted the need for desired flexibility to accommodate possible changes that might arise in the context of the reform proposals of the Secretary-General and subsequent decisions that might be adopted by the General Assembly. In 1997, following the establishment of one single department in this sector, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the subprogramme structure of the medium-term plan was reorganized (see para. 7 below). The present report presents the in-depth evaluation findings according to this revised structure. The global subprogrammes are reviewed in section III and the regional subprogrammes in section IV of the present report. Section V covers a number of common issues of programme implementation.

3. In the conduct of the in-depth evaluation, the following categories of information were utilized by the Central Evaluation Unit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services: (a) United Nations documents; (b) information from internal sources (the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the internal assessments and working documents of the regional commissions); (c) structured interviews and consultations with a number of government representatives, the staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions, staff of other Secretariat departments and organizations of the United Nations system and a number of experts, members of the Committee on Development Policy, academics and researchers, in Bangkok, New York and Santiago; and (d) in addition to the categories of information already described, work at other duty stations was assessed through information obtained from the regional commissions in response to specific queries.

II. Institutional arrangements

A. The intergovernmental agenda

4. The United Nations intergovernmental bodies in the economic and social sectors serve as a forum for monitoring and assessing trends and policies in global development as well as for negotiations and the adoption of instruments for international cooperation in development. These deliberations have resulted in the adoption of broad declarations of principles and objectives such as the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, which was adopted in 1990. The Strategy stressed that the major conferences of the United Nations already scheduled for the initial years of the Decade would be important occasions for reaching agreements that would give more specific content to the actions and commitments needed to realize the goals of the Strategy.[1] By resolution 51/240 of 20 June 1997, the General Assembly, building on the outcome of recent United Nations conferences and other relevant agreements, adopted the Agenda for Development, which was aimed at invigorating a renewed and strengthened partnership for development. In the Agenda it was considered that a consensus had emerged, from the major conferences on a multidimensional, comprehensive and integrated approach to development, recognizing, among other things, that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. The Agenda also stated that international cooperation in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policies should be reinforced with a view to promoting greater coherence and consistency of domestic policies. It was stressed that the effective implementation of the Agenda required the urgent mobilization and more efficient use of resources for development.

5. Regarding the question of financing for development, the General Assembly decided, in resolution 54/196 of 22 December 1999, to convene a high-level intergovernmental event on the question in 2001, to address national, international and systemic issues relating to financing for development in a holistic manner, in the context of globalization and interdependence. Concerning the review of the implementation of the International Development

Strategy, the Assembly, in resolution 54/206 of 22 December 1999, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its fifty-fifth session, a draft text of an international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium, building on the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and meetings, the Agenda for Development and any other relevant ongoing processes, and taking into account the dynamic changes to the world economy.

6. In the view of the Secretary-General, much of the recent work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies has focused on translating the plans and programmes agreed upon at the global conferences held earlier in the 1990s into action; similarly, the programme of work of the Secretariat was often oriented towards the priorities identified at the conferences (A/52/1, paras. 50-51). The demand for monitoring and appraisal increased with each new signed convention or agreement. The Economic and Social Council, in its agreed conclusions 1995/1, considered that the commissions and other intergovernmental bodies reviewing the implementation of each conference should be able to achieve greater coherence and mutual reinforcement, and that efforts towards coordinated follow-up to international conferences require appropriate measures to avoid and/or eliminate duplication of functions within the United Nations Secretariat.

B. Secretariat arrangements

7. Since the last in-depth evaluation was carried out in 1989 (E/AC.51/1989/4), the global programme implemented at Headquarters has been reorganized twice, in 1992 and in 1997. After the 1992 restructuring, the activities reviewed in the present report were carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. The 1997 reform, by merging the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the Department for Development Support and Management Services into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, meant, that the new Department, while maintaining a distinct capacity for economic and social data gathering and analysis, would act to consolidate capacities for policy analysis and policy coordination and enhance substantive support for the intergovernmental processes of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres (see A/51/829). This general orientation was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 and the new programme structure was approved by the Assembly in resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998. The activities of subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, approved in 1996, were redistributed accordingly (see table 1 below). After the 1997 reorganization, subprogramme 7.3, Global development trends, issues and policies, remained unchanged, while the activities of former subprogramme 7.4, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, were integrated into other subprogrammes.

8. At the regional level, the regional commissions, throughout the 1990s, have carried out reforms with differences in content and scope to respond to regional needs as reflected in the priorities set by members of the respective commissions (see Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, annex III, para. 3). Furthermore, most commissions have attempted to address development problems through interdisciplinary and intersectoral action. As a result, the global subprogrammes under review in the present report do not necessarily have corresponding subprogrammes in all regional commissions (see table 2 below). It is noted that every commission maintains a distinct capacity for the monitoring and analysis of economic and social development trends, issues and policies. In addition to subprogrammes listed in table 2, macro and microeconomic policy analysis is carried out under a number of other subprogrammes (see paras. 31, 38 and 40 below).

Table 1
Main activities of subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, in relation to the new programme structure of the revised medium-term plan

Subprogramme 7.3, Global development trends, issues and policies	*Moved to new subprogramme 28.7*
(a) Monitoring and assessing, from a global perspective, economic and social developments and policies;	Global development trends, issues and policies
(b) Assisting Governments in their consideration of issues pertaining to the financing of development;	
(c) Assisting Member States and intergovernmental bodies in the early identification of new and emerging issues in the world economy;	

Activities moved from subprogramme 7.4, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies	*To new subprogramme*
(d) Monitoring of socio-economic trends, identification of emerging issues and analysis of their implications for policy at the national and international levels;	28.3, Social policy and development
(e) Meeting the needs of Member States for information and policy-oriented analysis on the role of the State and market mechanisms;	28.8, Public administration, finance and development
(f) Addressing aspects of linkages between political and economic issues and policies, at the request of Governments and intergovernmental bodies.	

Source: A/51/6/Rev.1 and A/53/6/Rev.1.

Table 2
Regional subprogrammes of the medium-term plan for the period of 1998-2001 corresponding to the global subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4

Regional commissions	*Subprogrammes*
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)	Subprogramme 14.1, Facilitating economic and social policy analysis
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	Subprogramme 15.2, Development research and policy analysis Subprogramme 15.3, Social development
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)	Subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	Subprogramme 17.4, Macroeconomic equilibria, investment, financing Subprogramme 17.5, Social development and social equity Subprogramme 17.6, Administrative management
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	Subprogramme 18.3, Economic development and global changes

Source: A/51/6/Rev.1 and A/53/6/Rev.1.

9. After the two reorganizations of the Secretariat, a number of subprogrammes were significantly reformulated; it is not possible to precisely follow the shifts in resources for all activities. Broadly speaking, from an examination of the staffing levels for the bienniums 1988-1989 and 1998-1999, it can be concluded that, in this area of work of the Secretariat, over a 10-year period, resources remained relatively stable, with the exception of two programmes:

(a) At DESA, the staffing level for subprogramme 28.7, Global development, trends, issues and policies, is 50 per cent lower than it was 10 years earlier, for a level of activity not significantly reduced;

(b) At ECE, the staffing level of subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis, is 30 per cent lower, for a relatively higher level of activity.

C. Intergovernmental guidance

10. The General Assembly, in resolution 51/219 of 18 December 1996, emphasized the importance of the contribution of the sectoral, regional and central intergovernmental bodies, in particular the main committees of the Assembly, in reviewing and improving the quality of the medium-term plan and its revisions. Out of all the subprogrammes reviewed in the present report, only the programme of work of subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, is not reviewed by a specialized intergovernmental body. In the previous in-depth evaluation of this programme, in 1989, this situation had already been noted and it was observed that, as a consequence, the programme did not receive any overall direction, guidance or oversight from specialized intergovernmental bodies in the programme planning of its activities (E/AC.51/1989/4, para. 14). In 1990, the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 was submitted to the Committee for Development Planning, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, for comments (see para. 17 below); this was not done for subsequent medium-term plans. The Committee for Development Planning, among the different tasks entrusted to it, considered and evaluated the programmes and activities of the organs of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies relating to economic planning and projections (E/1996/97, para. 190 (f)). It should be noted that the proposed programme of work of subprogramme 28.8, Public administration, finance and development, is reviewed by the Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, a subsidiary body of the Council comparable to the Committee for Development Planning. In examining the question at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination emphasized the importance of adequate reviews by specialized intergovernmental bodies and recommended that these bodies, as well as the Economic and Social Council and the Main Committees of the General Assembly, should include an agenda item on programme planning in their programmes of work (A/54/16, para. 55). The review of the proposed programme of work of subprogramme 28.7 was not on the agenda of the 1999 session of the Economic and Social Council nor on that of the Second Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

III. Global programmes

A. Global development trends, issues and policies

1. *World Economic and Social Survey*

11. The results of research and analysis on development trends, issues and policies carried out under subprogramme 28.7 are brought to the attention of intergovernmental bodies either as separate reports or as part of the *World Economic Survey*, which, in 1994, was renamed the *World Economic and Social Survey*, and expanded to respond to the increasingly recognized linkages and interactions between economic and social issues. When the *Survey* was first introduced in 1947 it was the only publication providing an overview of global economic developments, however, there are now several publications that fulfil this role from different perspectives. The *Survey* continues to be published to broaden the debate and to introduce essential social and political dimensions into discussions that might otherwise have been dominated by narrowly economic and financial considerations. [2]

12. Before the reorganization of the programme of work of the Economic and Social Council in 1991, the *Survey* was one of the basic reports used in the general debate of the Council on international economic and social policy. It is now presented to the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Council and is also included in the documentation of the general debate of the Second Committee of the General Assembly. As an indication of the use made by these bodies of the analysis presented in the *Survey*, in 1988, there were 22 explicit references to the *Survey* in the Council's general debate. In 1998, there were two references to the *Survey* during the high-level segment. In the same year, during the general debate of the Second Committee, there were three references to the *Survey*. There are presently references to a number of comparable publications, although the number of references to each publication is not higher than for the *Survey*. Regarding the continued relevance of such publications for the work of intergovernmental bodies, the General Assembly noted in the annex to resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, that there should be greater use of relevant background documents in the Second Committee such as the *World Economic and Social Survey*, the *Trade and Development Report*, the *World Development Report* and the *World Economic Outlook*.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly also stated its interest in the continued improvement of other reports to make them more concise and action-oriented, by highlighting the critical areas requiring action by the General Assembly and, as appropriate, by making specific recommendations. At the outset, according to Economic and Social Council resolution 26 (IV), the *Survey* was expected to contain recommendations on action to be taken by the Council. Occasionally, over the last 50 years the General Assembly has requested that recommendations to address specific issues be presented in the *Survey*; the last such request, on the matter of global financial flows, was in 1997.

13. Delegates to the General Assembly, interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit, commented that they use the *Survey* for reference; several stated that they only consult its overview chapter. Regarding its relevance to policy makers in Governments, in response to a 1997 readership survey, to the permanent missions and international organizations, to which only 6 per cent of those surveyed responded, the Commonwealth Secretariat stated that the *Survey* is used regularly to inform the finance ministers, who meet before attending the annual meetings of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund. They found the analysis contained in the *Survey* to be of very high quality and at times more incisive than that put out by the Bretton Woods institutions. With the limited feedback obtained by the programme and by the Central Evaluation Unit, there are indications that the *Survey* is of interest to officials in national ministries, when it reaches them, although at the national level more attention is given to country-specific information. Development economists interviewed by the Unit stated that they regretted that insufficient attention is given to analysis found in the *Survey*.

14. Since the 1980s, the *Survey* has taken a more analytical and less descriptive approach than before and has furthered the discussion of forecasts of global economic activity. The improved capacity to forecast was facilitated by the programme's association with the Project LINK (see para. 42 below). Although appreciation for the improvements in the presentation of the *Survey* were expressed in 1995, it was noted that the needs of members of intergovernmental bodies for concise and action-oriented documents have not yet been adequately addressed. The *Survey* is one of the most voluminous publications in its field, with a certain degree of overlap with other publications and its findings are, in general, presented to induce reflection rather than action; policy recommendations do not stand out. The review of the United Nations economic reports conducted by the United Nations University (UNU)/World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), in 1997 at the request of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (A/53/31, para. 178), recommended that the *Survey* focus on one central theme each year, as other comparable reports do, as it may lead to more in-depth and innovative analysis. Part II of the *Survey* is now set aside for the discussion of one central theme. Regarding overlap with other publications, the Secretariat decided that the *Survey* will focus primarily on the integrated analysis of economic and social development at the global and national levels, while the *Trade and Development Report* will focus on the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology and investment.[3]

2. Substantive services provided by the Secretariat

15. Support is provided under subprogramme 28.7 to intergovernmental bodies in relation to specific issues on their agenda through the preparation of topical reports or in-session substantive services. Regarding the question of financing for development, services were provided under the subprogramme to the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on the question for its work during the Fifty-third session of the General Assembly. The constructive inputs made to the discussions of the Working Group led to the formulation of recommendations on the agenda of the high-level forum, which will convene on the matter in 2001. This initiative involved liaising with Governments and a broad range of stakeholders, including actors both within and outside the United Nations, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 52/179 of 18 December 1997. In addition, the Secretariat developed and maintained the Financing for Development web site (www.un.org/esa/analysis.ffd). The site, which was designed with the needs of participants in the Working Group and stakeholders in mind and was updated in near real-time, became a useful tool for those involved in the process. In its resolution 54/196, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to initiate preliminary consultations with all relevant stakeholders, in particular the World Bank, the

International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, on the potential modalities of their participation in the upcoming High-level International Intergovernmental Event for Financing for Development.

3. Long-term trends in economic development

16. Comprehensive reports on long-term trends in economic development were submitted by the Secretariat to the General Assembly as early as 1982 and were regularly updated to serve as a quantitative and qualitative framework for the preparation and monitoring of implementation of international development strategies. Regarding the Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, it was observed that it was quickly outdated by the unanticipated worsening of the international economic situation, which made many of its targets irrelevant (A/43/376, para. 4). During the Fourth Decade, more attention was given to the implementation of specific commitments entered into at the major United Nations conferences and meetings. In this area, the Secretariat discontinued the preparation of reports on long-term trends and did not maintain the database used for this purpose. Reports on long-term trends are still prepared in other areas, such as population or sustainable development. For example, the report entitled *Critical Trends: Global Change and Sustainable Development* (ST/ESA/255), prepared in 1997 by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for the review of implementation of Agenda 21, surveyed long-term trends in selected environmental and socio-economic issues. It focused on the role of policy in influencing developments over the short and long term — a number of issues being explored in a 10 to 60 year time-frame. Subprogramme 28.7 is mandated to provide perspective studies of long-term global trends in economic and social development (A/53/6/Rev.1, para. 28.19 (c)), however, the studies prepared under the subprogramme are mostly based on short-term outlooks or medium-term perspectives. Other organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, in its *World Economic Outlook*, also tend to limit themselves to medium-term baseline scenarios. The international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/206 (see para. 5 above), should aim, as set forth in the resolution, at monitoring long-term trends in the global economy as well as the attainment of internationally agreed targets.

4. Committee on Development Policy

17. Substantive servicing is provided under subprogramme 28.7 to the Committee on Development Policy, the former Committee on Development Planning, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. Its members are experts serving in their individual capacity. Established in 1964, the Committee was entrusted with various tasks, including: to assess world development trends and prospects; to review the list of the least developed among the developing countries and to consider improvements in the criteria for identifying these countries; and generally to study individual questions in its field of competence referred to it by the Council, the Secretary-General or the executive heads of the specialized agencies. To carry out its tasks efficiently, the Committee, in addition to its annual meeting, used to hold meetings of up to three working groups, and submitted annual reports to the Council. During the 1980s, the reports were frequently cited during interventions of the members of the Council; in recent years, citations have become rare and often reflect disagreements with the views of the Committee. In 1997, in his programme for reform, the Secretary-General proposed that the Committee be discontinued and that, instead, the Council be assisted by specialized panels of experts on particular subjects.

18. After the 1998 review of its subsidiary bodies, the Economic and Social Council decided, in resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, to maintain the Committee and arranged that the Council would decide each year on its appropriate programme of work. The Committee was to continue the triennial review of the status of least developed countries, to meet once a year for a period of five days and to explore the scope for effective preparations for its deliberations via informal networking arrangements. Although the Council considered that dissemination of information on the Committee's work should be improved, in 1999, the first report of the Committee, prepared under this new arrangement was issued late. This was partially a consequence of the new working arrangements. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs stated that, being new, confronted with a challenging assignment and needing time to meld intellectually, the Committee was unable to finalize its report during its meeting and had to resort to the time-consuming and highly unsatisfactory practice of doing so by correspondence. The Vice-Chair of the Committee introduced the

relevant part of the report to the high-level session of the Council, but little use was made of that part of the report. Later in the session, the Chairman introduced the report as a whole and considerable attention was subsequently paid to the Committee's proposals regarding the incorporation of the vulnerability dimension into the criteria for the designation of least developed countries. In 1999, the Committee continued its work on a vulnerability index as a criterion to designate least developed countries; in addition, the General Assembly requested, in particular, that the new international development strategy (see para. 5 above) be drafted in collaboration with the Committee on Development Policy.

19. Regarding the new working methods recommended by the Council, the Committee was of the view that the nature of its work is such that informal networking arrangements could only be of limited benefit and that additional group discussions were necessary (E/1999/33, para. 136). At the end of 1999, the Council requested the Secretary-General to facilitate an expert group meeting of members of the Committee in early 2000 to enable them to carry out the necessary diagnostic testing and simulations of the proposed criteria for the designation of least developed country status. The new working methods recommended by the Council compare with the long-established methods of work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, which meets once a year to explore, in open discussion, a set of current issues. It should be noted, however, that the Board's discussion is reflected in a brief report to the Secretary-General and does not represent the conclusion of an annual programme of research. Furthermore, the Board has the opportunity to meet a second time each year in its capacity as the Board of Trustees of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

B. Social policy and development

1. Monitoring and analysis of trends and issues

20. In accordance with the revised medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, activities under subprogramme 28.3, Social policy and development, involve the strengthening of international cooperation for social development, with particular attention to the three core issues of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration. In 1996, the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1996/7 of 23 July 1996, decided that substantive items of the future sessions of the Commission for Social Development would exclusively address the follow-up to the Summit and would be organized around three sets of subjects:

(a) Consideration of subjects identified in the multi-year programme of work, including the situation of social groups;

(b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, as necessary;

(c) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting social development, as necessary.

The monitoring and analysis of trends and issues, assigned under former subprogramme 7.4, are now integrated into the work on specific issues of concern under subprogramme 28.3, which is outside the scope of the present report. In this regard, it should be noted that the programme on social development was the subject of an in-depth evaluation in 1994 (E/AC.51/1994/2), with a triennial review in 1997 (E/AC.51/1997/5). The preparation of the *Report on the World Social Situation*, which was formerly assigned to subprogramme 7.4, is continued as a distinct activity and is reviewed in para. 21 below.

2. *Report on the World Social Situation*

21. A comprehensive assessment of global trends and an analysis of their implications for social development can be found in the *Report on the World Social Situation*, which is published every four years. The primary audience for the *Report* is the Commission for Social Development, although it is also presented to the General Assembly. The *Report* is more neutral in its treatment of possible policy options than other reports designed to highlight and promote particular policies. Regarding the Report's use of statistics and the methodology followed by its authors, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), in its 1997 review of United Nations social "flagship" reports, noted that the *Report* is less willing to play with figures than is the case with either the *Human Development Report* or the *World Development Report*. The *Report on the World Social Situation* avoids using composite indices and one of the reasons for publishing it only every four years is the decision to rely on reported data, which in the social field arrive

many years late, rather than on projections, which form the primary basis for yearly reports. The *Report* is intended to generate further ideas as well as actions. The 1993 edition of the *Report* and its addendum were the basic reports used by the Commission for Social Development during its review of the world social situation in that year. In 1993, on the same issue, there were a large number of explicit references to the *Report* during the debate of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. In contrast, these two bodies did not refer to the 1997 edition of the *Report* during their meetings that year. In its above-mentioned 1997 review, UNRISD observed that on almost every issue covered in the *Report*, one could go to another United Nations report and find much more detailed information. This did not mean, in principle, that the *Report* should be considered redundant, because it is meant to fulfil a specific function, that of Surveying social trends, for a specific audience, the Commission for Social Development. The review concluded that, in order to remain relevant to the work of the Commission and build on its strengths, neutrality and sound methodology, the *Report* must identify and discuss emerging social issues and trends, including covering topics that are inherently controversial. UNRISD stressed that the *Report* should be allowed to become a forward-looking rather than a review publication. The 2000 edition of the Report is focused on issues of equity; it seeks to identify and document changes that are significant in the long term.

C. Public administration, finance and development

22. During the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis expanded its work on research and analysis on microeconomic issues. This work included studies relating to employment, technology and the use of market-based mechanisms both to meet environmental objectives and to provide public services.[4] The Department also undertook a number of activities that reflected the increasing interrelationship between the political, security and development aspects of the organization's work, including assessing the impact of sanctions on third parties and analysing the issues of coercive economic measures.[5] This work has continued under the present subprogramme 28.8, along with work related to the programme in public administration and finance.

1. United Nations programme in public administration and finance

23. The United Nations programme in public administration and finance, which, since the 1950s, has sought to meet the needs of developing countries in improving their administrative and financial systems for development, has been strengthened by the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996. The Assembly considered that the rapid pace and interdependence of global, political, social and economic developments, and their implications for all countries highlighted the need for improved efficiency and effective public institutions, administrative procedures and sound financial management, taking into account the diversity of experiences in public administrative systems. In 1997, the Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance recommended that the programme focus on the implementation of resolution 50/225 and that, to this end, it should serve as a hub and forum for the global exchange of information on policies, best practices and methods and provide advisory services to interested Governments. The clearing house function recommended by the Meeting of Experts is being developed under subprogramme 28.8. In addition to the work of the Meeting of Experts, the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters is also carried out under subprogramme 28.8.

24. Since 1996, cooperation has been initiated and strengthened with numerous organizations. Under subprogramme 28.8 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has collaborated on several initiatives, one of which, the administration and cost of elections project, carried out in cooperation with two other organizations, set up the first global information database on alternatives in election administration — its web site is coordinated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In addition, the development of an on-line network on public administration and finance, the dissemination of information and the provision of technical assistance and the review and analysis of policy options with respect to a number of related issues, such as the interface of States and markets, the maintenance of social safety nets and the elaboration and implementation of fiscal policies, are all carried out under the subprogramme. The operational activities of

the subprogramme, that is, the advisory and training services delivered by interregional and technical advisers, have provided inputs to a number of its publications. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs considers that, although only a short time has passed since the reorganization of the Secretariat in 1997, it has already been proven that it is very useful to link the economic and the management issues of the public sector. The Department also considers that it has been proven effective to combine the more analytical-oriented capacity of the former Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis with the more technical assistance-oriented capacity of the former Department for Development Support and Management Services.

2. Linkages between political and economic issues and policies

25. The involvement of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in assessing the economic impact of sanctions arose from the recognition by the General Assembly, in resolution 47/120B of 20 September 1993, that, in the conditions of economic interdependence that existed at that time, the implementation of preventive or enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the Charter against any State continued to create special economic problems for certain other States. In resolution 50/51 of 11 December 1995, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to make appropriate arrangements in the relevant parts of the Secretariat, in order to carry out, in a coordinated way, a number of functions related to the issue. The Assembly was interested, *inter alia*, in the development of a possible methodology for assessing the consequences actually incurred by third States as a result of sanctions. The summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group convened in 1998 by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to consider the matter was welcomed by the General Assembly,[6] which requested, in resolution 54/107 of 9 December 1999, that the competent units within the Secretariat develop the adequate capacity and appropriate modalities, technical procedures and guidelines to continue to carry out the functions entrusted to the Secretariat by Assembly resolution 50/51. It should be noted that, during this period, the related substantive work and secretariat support at the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, and subsequently at the Department Economic and Social Affairs, was provided by one professional staff member. Future activities by the Department in this area, after intergovernmental agreement on a methodology and when requests for impact assessments are received, would involve data collection and analysis. A related set of issues, from a methodological point of view, concerns the relationship between disarmament and development, a matter which was examined in several issues of the *World Economic and Social Survey*. The General Assembly, in resolution 54/54 T of 1 December 1998, welcomed the establishment of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP and Department for Disarmament Affairs Steering Group set up to determine the short, medium and long-term programme priorities in this area.

26. The Department for Development Support and Management Services was more involved than the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in post-conflict and rehabilitation activities, having implemented a number of projects to address the specific requirements of countries in crisis, which needed assistance in rebuilding government structures so that basic services could be provided or restored, and ensuring that an environment was created in which conflict could not resume.[7] The current work under subprogramme 28.8 in this area is a mix of analytical and operational activities, including participating in meetings coordinated by the Administrative Committee on Coordination on approaches and methodology for post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as implementing UNDP projects on the development of conflict analysis and conflict resolution capacity-building. In 1998, in its conclusions on the Department's revised medium-term plan, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly consider possible arrangements for the establishment of a programme and/or subprogramme in the medium-term plan on post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction as well as on the transition from relief to development (A/53/16, para. 174). Subsequently, in resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a preliminary report, in accordance with the existing mandates of the General Assembly, on possible arrangements for post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as on the transition from relief to development, maintaining the distinct nature of both

activities, for consideration by the relevant Main Committees of the General Assembly and intergovernmental bodies.

IV. Regional programmes

A. Economic Commission for Africa

27. At the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), economic and social policy analysis is carried out under subprogramme 14.1. Its work is organized around three themes of development: economic analysis and policy; trade and debt; and social policy and poverty analysis. Its general goal is to produce timely, appropriate and influential information and analysis. The analysis of social development is meant to influence African decision makers in the financial and political sectors. The 1999 *Economic Report on Africa*, using the theme "Challenges of poverty reduction and sustainable development in Africa", analysed the conditions needed to achieve the international development goal of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015. Work on trade and debt aims at assisting African countries to optimize their trade, financial and monetary relations within themselves and with non-African countries. Studies and working papers are prepared and meetings are organized, frequently at the ministerial level.

28. The two main recurrent reports prepared under the subprogramme are the biannual *Economic and Social Survey of Africa*, which analyses the latest economic and social trends and the factors influencing them, and the annual *Economic Report on Africa*, a much shorter publication than the *Survey*, that reviews the main trends in African economies during the year against the background of developments in the world economy. The *Report* is aimed at the ECA Conference of Ministers, the ministers of finance and the governors of central banks. The intended audience for the *Survey* belongs broadly to the groups of policy makers in the region and the specialized public, which the *Report* also intends to reach. In 1999 the *Report* was reoriented to undertake the analysis of African economies in a framework that benchmarks their performance against best practices in the region; new indices were developed for evaluating economic performance and sustainability. Participants at the thirty-third session of the Commission, in 1999, noted the qualitative leap which the *Report* of that year had made over earlier reports and appreciated the basic idea of using African best practices as the benchmark for the measurement of country efforts and comparison of their achievements; they observed, however, that there was need for further technical work as well as improvement on background data.[8] The ECA Conference of Ministers in ECA resolution 831 (XXXIII), requested the Executive Secretary to put at the disposal of member States an explanatory note on the methodology and technical approaches used to enable member States to study the findings of the *Economic Report on Africa* and the proposed economic performance indicators as well as to refine and internalize them in their assessments, analysis and policy-making.

29. *The African Women's Report* is prepared on a biennial basis under the subprogramme promoting the advancement of women. The *Report* is devoted to policy analysis and advocacy for gender awareness and to the promotion of public policies supportive of the advancement of women in Africa. Each edition of the *Report* focuses on a specific theme. The theme of the 1998 *Report* was "Post-conflict Reconstruction in Africa: A Gender Perspective". The Report's intended users are government policy makers, business leaders, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the academic community. ECA is the only organization in the region that issues this type of publication in the area of gender and development.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

30. At the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the 1997 review of the Commission and its reform programme reconfirmed the multidisciplinary approach adopted in 1992. Regarding the ongoing guidance received by the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives assists the Executive Secretary in drawing up proposals for the secretariat programme of work. The Economic and Social Council considered that the Advisory Committee needed to examine ways to enhance and improve its ability to advise the Commission. ESCAP noted that reform efforts should be pursued in the broader context of economic and social developments in the region and the Commission's ability to respond, in an adequate and timely manner, to emerging problems.[9]

31. Activities under subprogramme 15.2, Development research and policy analysis, address these concerns. The main publication in this area is the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*. The provision of advisory services and the organization of expert group meetings and workshops are important aspects of the work under the subprogramme. Several analytical and operational activities of subprogramme 15.2 apply to social development, such as the formulation of analytical tools for policy decisions. Activities on macroeconomic issues relating to least developed, landlocked and island developing countries are mainstreamed into the work of all ESCAP subprogrammes, overall coordination being carried out under subprogramme 15.2. Relevant analytical work is also carried out under other subprogrammes. One in particular, subprogramme 15.1, Regional economic cooperation, relates to the capacities of developing countries to participate more effectively in multilateral trade negotiations and subregional economic cooperation programmes. Subprogramme 15.3, Social development, is largely organized around the follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and several other international plans of action. The Commission commended the role of ESCAP in providing technical assistance to governments in national capacity-building, particularly in social policy analysis and the development of comprehensive multisectoral strategies for poverty alleviation integrated within national development plans.[10]

32. The *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* provides an assessment of the socio-economic performance of the region, with attention to alternative policy choices and the social development implications of economic trends. The *Survey*'s intended readers are the government officials of countries of the region who are directly involved in macroeconomic policy formulation and implementation and it is also disseminated to the specialized public and organizations working on these issues. It is the principal background document of the annual session of ESCAP. At the time of issuance of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, ESCAP intended to develop its capacity to forecast the major developments in the global and regional economy more accurately. It is noted that, well before the onset of the Asian financial crisis, ESCAP had commissioned country studies to identify the strengths, weaknesses and remedial actions required to improve financial sector management. The 1997 issue of the *Survey* highlighted the risk that had been introduced through the financial sector at that time.

C. Economic Commission for Europe

33. In the field of economic analysis, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) contributes, under its plan of action, to economic integration in the region by providing an international perspective for national policy makers and, when appropriate, facilitating the convergence of their policies. This activity, carried out under subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis, results in the publication of a number of annual and occasional publications; the main annual report being the *Economic Survey of Europe*. In addition, policy debates on economic problems and policies of countries of the ECE region, based on issues discussed in the *Survey*, are organized at venues such as the annual spring seminar, which takes place before the annual meeting of the Commission, and at several intergovernmental committees of ECE where economic analysis serves as a background to sectoral analysis. In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and also under subprogramme 16.4, ECE pursues population activities that will be reviewed in the in-depth evaluation prepared for the 2001 session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

34. In 1998, following a decision of the Commission, the *Economic Survey of Europe* became an annual volume of three issues published at the beginning of the second, third and fourth quarters. The first issue focuses on economic developments in the region in the past and coming year, with emphasis on the economies in transition and selected aspects of the transition process. The second issue contains a brief mid-year update on the economies of the region and addresses selected topics. The third issue includes the papers presented to the ECE spring seminar, and replaces the *Economic Bulletin for Europe*. The *Survey*'s intended users are economists and policy makers working in national administrations and international organizations and the academic community. The importance of the academic community in policy-making was revealed by the 1996 readership survey of professional economists on the mailing lists of the *Survey* and the *Bulletin*. Three quarters of those responding to the readership survey served as advisers to their own governments; 80 per cent of the respondents found the publications

"essential" or "very useful"; more than 90 per cent stated that they found in the publications information that they could not find elsewhere.

D. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

35. In 1996, in the context of the reform of the United Nations and its impact on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Commission was defined as a centre for collaboration with member States in a comprehensive analysis of development processes geared to the design, monitoring and evaluation of public policies that would provide the related operational services. At the 1996 meeting of the ad hoc working group established by the Commission to define ECLAC priorities, the delegations concurred with the proposal that the programme of work should pay special heed to the social dimension in all subject areas.[11]

36. The results of analysis of the overall economic and social trends in the region and on the economic policies and situations of specific countries are published annually in the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean* and the *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean*. These publications are prepared under subprogramme 17.4, Macroeconomic equilibria, investment and financing. The *Preliminary Overview*, published at the end of each year, presents a comprehensive evaluation of the economic situation for the countries of the region during the current year; the 1998 edition included, for the first time, projections for the following year. The *Survey* is released at the end of the third quarter; its first chapter, the summary, is released a few months earlier. The summary offers an evaluation of the economic situation during the first six months of the year and presents annual forecasts for the principal indicators; it is widely distributed. In addition to the numerous statistical tables included in all the publications, a statistical annex in electronic form, one CD-ROM in 1999, is attached to the *Survey*; the annex provides access to over 350 tables, including several tables presented in a 10-year time series, at regional and country levels, and permits further data processing by users. Data and findings presented in these publications are well covered by the media. The readership survey carried out in 1998 indicates that the *Survey* is primarily used by academics and researchers, businessmen and government officials. Regarding ECLAC's programme of work, it should be noted that economic projections are prepared in two different divisions. In other regions, economic projections are prepared by only one unit, the unit responsible for analysing overall economic and social trends, which appears to be a more efficient arrangement.

37. In the area of social development, within the context of moderate economic recovery, ECLAC's research focused on policies that might contribute to the struggle to overcome conditions of poverty and social inequity. The main vehicle for the analysis of social development in the region is the *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean*, prepared annually under subprogramme 17.5, Social development and social equity, in collaboration with other international organizations, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Government officials, academics and researchers make up two thirds of its readership. The *Panorama* is usually presented and used as a background document at several expert group meetings in the region.

38. In the area of regional integration and cooperation, ECLAC is assisting Governments in the analysis of conceptual as well as practical issues arising from the regional integration process. ECLAC also collaborates with the countries in the region in the development of policies designed to strengthen the technological dimension of production activities, increase competitiveness and stimulate entrepreneurial development.

39. In the area of administrative management, which is included under subprogramme 17.6, ECLAC aims at facilitating the development of an analytical framework available to the countries of the region, and, at the request of governments, at providing technical assistance for improving the design of public policies. Using research done under other programme areas of the Commission, it is the only subprogramme of all regional commissions that corresponds to the global programme addressing these issues.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

40. At the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the objectives under subprogramme 18.3, Economic development and

global changes, are, *inter alia*, to expand understanding of economic development and to strengthen the capacity of member States to implement economic reform policies. This subprogramme prepares the *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region*; it also addresses trade-related issues. The *Survey* is conceived as a multidisciplinary publication receiving contributions from several parts of the Commission. The *Survey* presents a comprehensive analysis of the major socio-economic developments in the region; one of its chapters treats different issues of social development. After the addition of a new agenda item at the Commission's session on issues of importance to the region, a second volume of the *Survey*, part II, has been issued since 1995 to address these issues. The *Survey*'s intended users are policy makers, officials in national administrations and researchers. In conjunction with the *Survey*, a brief document, the *Preliminary overview of socio-economic developments in the ESCWA region*, was introduced in 1996 to supplement the assessment of the region's economic performance at the end of each year with a broad outlook for the following year. ESCWA is the only organization in the region that provides such a forecast, offering estimates not significantly different from the final data presented in the *Survey*, in the second quarter of the following year. Data and analytical studies on issues such as poverty, issues emanating from follow-up to the global conferences and on the impact of world economic arrangements relevant to economic and social policy analysis are prepared and published under other ESCWA subprogrammes. The *Survey* and the *Preliminary Overview* are launched at press conferences and are widely quoted by the press in the region.

V. Common issues of programme implementation

A. Complementarity of analytical and operational activities

41. In the conclusion to its recent review of the commissions, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, stressed that they fulfil norm-setting, dissemination and analytical functions as well as undertake operational activities that are complementary and mutually reinforcing. At Headquarters, the establishment of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has created an interface between global policies and national action and between research, policy and operational activities. For example, its subprogramme 28.3, Social policy and development, provides advisory services to governments to implement further international instruments related to social policies and planning and to assist them in analytical assessment, diagnostic studies and evaluations of their current social situations. For the biennium 1998-1999, more than 40 per cent of planned outputs were related to technical cooperation. The knowledge and experience accumulated through this activity feeds back into the analysis of current developments carried out at Headquarters.

42. Subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, is associated with Project LINK, an international economic research network carrying out studies on short-term projections of the world economy. With inputs from the national LINK centres and information available within the United Nations system, a world economic forecast is prepared twice a year. The LINK national econometric models are developed independently by national experts relying on national statistics. In the fall of 1999, at a meeting of Project LINK, more than half of the 50 forecasts submitted by the national centres came from developing countries or countries with economies in transition. Recently, under the auspices of subprogramme 28.7, requirements to strengthen the capacity of policy makers and researchers in low income countries in the area of policy modelling at the national level was investigated. Beyond this involvement with partners outside the Organization at a technical level, the activities under the subprogramme, which is expected to contribute to economic policy-making at the national and international levels, does not involve work that provides familiarity with country-specific situations. This is in contrast to subprogrammes 28.3 and 28.8, under which advisory services are provided (see paras. 23-24 and 41 above). In particular, work relevant to economic issues is carried out under subprogramme 28.3, where advisory services cover, *inter alia*, socio-economic policy formulation and implementation, structural adjustment policies and the operationalization of global policies on social and economic development. Although a relatively large number of economists are assigned to the work of subprogramme 28.3, institutional

interactions between subprogramme 28.7 and the Socio-Economic Policy and Development Management Branch of subprogramme 28.3, which provides advisory services, are limited. There is no joint participation in the analysis of developments in national economies and in needs assessment missions.

B. Coordinated action within the Secretariat

43. The need for an integrated approach to issues and coordinated action is a theme that appears in nearly all resolutions of intergovernmental bodies. At the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, officers consulted by the Central Evaluation Unit stated that the collaboration between programme areas has improved since the establishment of the Department. For example, draft reports are routinely circulated to ensure consistency of analysis and data throughout the Department. A few inter-divisional thematic groups were set up on the issues of poverty, finance and gender. However, the potential for joint activities was not fully realized. At ESCAP, despite the significant decrease in extrabudgetary resources during the last 10 years, the funding policy of one donor from 1994 to 1997 actually enhanced the inter-divisional implementation of activities through the funding of multi-year large-scale (umbrella) projects. Apart from the implementation of inter-divisional umbrella projects, examples of collaborative inter-divisional efforts are sporadic, though encouraged. At ECLAC, inter-divisional collaboration is more extensive. For example, the assessment by ECLAC, between 1997 and 1999, of the impact of the economic reforms introduced in the region, conducted in collaboration with research centres and national authorities in nine countries and coordinated with organizations such as the Interamerican Development Bank and the World Bank, involved the participation of several programme areas and the regional offices of ECLAC. In order to widen the scope of the analysis, in terms of both the links between micro and macroeconomics and the links between economic policies and social evolution, cooperation between different programme areas took place through the implementation of multidisciplinary research projects. The coordination of Secretariat work on gender issues is the subject of special efforts, which will be reviewed in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the advancement of women programme.

44. The collaboration between different parts of the Secretariat has been the subject of intergovernmental concern. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, stressed that linking the activities of the regional commissions more effectively with the overall activities of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors should be pursued vigorously and that the undertaking of joint exercises should be encouraged between the secretariat of each commission, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD. For the first time, in 1996, the authors of the United Nations economic surveys met to learn from each other's experiences in generating the reports. In two commissions, the authors told the Central Evaluation Unit that there had been greater coordination in the preparation of the surveys, partly as the result of the meeting. Personal interaction between staff at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the commissions had been useful from the onset of the financial crisis in 1997 as they tried to deepen their common understanding of the situation as it increasingly took on the dimensions of a global crisis. Unfortunately, outside this informal network, exchanges have been limited. The agreement, at the 1996 meeting, to establish a consolidated inventory of research studies from each of the regions and make it available to all has not been realized. When the contents of the annual surveys are thought out, a call for ideas and contributions is not sent to other parts of the Secretariat and experts outside the Organization, as is the case with the UNCTAD *World Investment Report* and other comparable reports. In its comments to a draft of the present report, ESCAP stated that a consistent United Nations view on global economic developments is of critical importance and that resources should be made available for more systematic collaboration between the regional commissions, UNCTAD and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs prior to the preparation of the global and regional economic and social surveys. This could take the form of an informal meeting between the main authors of the surveys.

45. In resolution 1998/46, the Economic and Social Council found it desirable to encourage better two-way flow of information on activities of the regional commissions, including through the simultaneous launching of the economic and social surveys. Joint launching might be difficult to organize for several reasons, including the fact that the calendar for the publication of each survey varies. The improved flow

of information recommended by the Council could take place in a round-table or panel format for the benefit of delegates, similar to the practice that has been developed in recent years at the Second Committee of the General Assembly. The existing practice of cross-reference, in the form of citation or boxed-text, to analysis presented in other reports could be expanded.

46. In 1997, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD undertook a review of their activities in the macroeconomic area in order to strengthen their cooperation. A number of measures were agreed upon, including the issuance of a joint report on the world economic situation and prospects at the end of each year, replacing the former part I of the *World Economic and Social Survey*. The report on prospects for the year 2000 was not available at the end of 1999. In response to a request of the General Assembly in its resolution 53/172 of 15 December 1998, the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, a report on the financial crisis and its impact on growth and development, which used the cooperative efforts of various components of the Secretariat and also benefited from ongoing cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions.[12] UNCTAD submitted a separate report on the same subject. At UNCTAD, the Division involved in this cooperative effort with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, stated that considerable difficulties were experienced in integrating the output provided by each partner into a single unified text. In the meantime, collaboration between the Department and other United Nations organizations was developed. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, commended the unusually close collaboration of the Department during the preparation of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in 1999. UNESCO found its cooperation with the Department very useful and sees scope for future cooperation. The United Nations University, which participates in the work of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, believes that it could make increased contribution to the Department's subprogramme activities reviewed in the present report through its policy-oriented research work.

47. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, established by the Secretary-General in 1997 as part of his programme for reform, aims, as do the other executive committees, to reduce duplication of effort and facilitate greater complementarity and coherence between each unit of the Organization. Several policy and advocacy papers on issues such as the international financial architecture, the debt problems of developing countries and the social dimensions of macroeconomic policy resulted from collaboration between the Secretariat, including the regional commissions, and the organizations of the United Nations system in the economic and social sectors. The regional commissions are also pursuing collaboration on a range of issues. For example, the directors in charge of transport in the five regional commissions met in Cairo in December 1999 to review developments in the transport sector in the respective regions and possibilities for cooperation among the commissions in this sector.

C. Focused research and analysis

48. In planning the work of several programmes reviewed above, focus was placed on fewer activities. In research and analytical work, the focus on one set of specific issues frequently led to increased expertise and collaboration with national authorities. At ECLAC, a small unit, the Development Finance Unit, over a 10-year period, conducted studies, bridging macroeconomics and social development issues, on reforms of pension and public health programmes in the region. The results of the studies contributed to policy reforms by countries in the region. The Unit is also providing technical and policy advice, at the invitation of national authorities, during discussions with the Bretton Woods institutions on national reforms. In recent years, the annual economic surveys have tended to focus on one main topic. This is the case with the ECE *Survey*, which emphasized the analysis of transition economies in the early 1990s and is now shifting towards the problems of the economies of south-eastern Europe (see para. 34 above). The interest in the new methodological approach by the ECA *Economic Report* and the focus on specific themes by the *Economic Report* and the *African Women's Report* were noted in paragraphs 28 and 29 above. It is observed that the shift from surveys that cover a range of topics in broad overview or summary form to more focused analysis, with a different topic every year, generally requires additional expertise, as was the case for the 1999 edition of the *World Economic and Social Survey*.

49. This additional expertise is frequently obtained through extensive consultations with experts in governments and research institutions, a well-established process in several commissions. For example, in 1997 at ESCAP, one publication, entitled *Asia and the Pacific into the Twenty-first Century: Prospects for Social Development*, was prepared through the collective efforts of secretariat staff and a number of consultants and referees, some of them providing their services without charge. A summary of the study was presented to the Commission which commended the secretariat on the high quality of the documentation and endorsed the findings therein.[13] In its comments to a draft of the present report, ESCAP stated that this kind of collaboration is the norm in virtually all extrabudgetary activities involving the production of a publication. In some regions, professional associations provide a good interface with the professional community, however, the constitution of a representative and reputable network of experts has not been achieved everywhere.

D. Quality of data

50. The 1993 revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the latest edition of the IMF *Balance of Payments Manual* have greatly improved government reporting. However, as noted in the *World Economic and Social Survey, 1999*, inconsistency of coverage, definitions and data-collection methods among reporting countries as well as late, incomplete or non-reported data have become major analytical handicaps when comparisons are made between countries or groupings of countries. As a result, there are serious gaps in international databases. There are also many instances of inconsistencies between data disseminated at the international level, which were documented in a recent report of the Secretary-General on the subject (E/1999/11). Among several Secretariat initiatives, ECLAC is presently enhancing its capacity to gather and analyse monthly and quarterly indicators on economic activity. Indicators used to monitor social development are the most problematic. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, officers in the regional commissions stated that the Secretariat should move from revisiting theoretical issues to forming a consensus on the practical measures needed to improve their monitoring functions. Such initiatives have been taken in the recent past. For example, in 1997 the Statistical Commission entrusted the development of international standards for the definition of poverty to an expert group, comprising country experts and experts from international bodies, with ECLAC acting as its secretariat.[14] Regarding gender issues, experts meeting in Santiago at the end of 1999 discussed the question of gender indicators and their utilization in policy-making. They concluded that, although important progress had been made in this area during the last 10 years, a number of gaps in available information and in its dissemination remained. Among the difficulties identified in the ECLAC region were the lack of information for the integration of the gender perspective in macroeconomic policies and the fact that desegregation of data by gender is not generalized.

E. Dissemination of the results of research and analysis

1. Reaching government representatives

51. The concern of the General Assembly regarding the need for greater use of background documents in the Second Committee was noted in paragraph 12 above. There are indications of use of such documents by the regional commissions, although explicit references to background documents, such as the regional economic and social surveys, are occasional; there are one or two references during a session, sometimes none. It may be that the structure of the sessions and the available time do not allow for substantive discussion of emerging topics and issues, as commented upon by government representatives to the 1999 session of the ESCAP, in response to a survey by the secretariat. In the Agenda for Development, it was stated that the capacity of the United Nations and its various bodies to undertake analytical and policy-oriented work in the economic and social fields must be fully utilized and it was recommended that the General Assembly consider the use of innovative mechanisms, such as panel discussions with delegations and interactive debates with the active participation of Secretariat and agency representatives as well as outside experts.[15] Since that time, the Bureau of the Second Committee, with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has increased the number of such panels. These events are well attended by delegates who consider they provide them with useful information. The main findings of the economic and social surveys are, in general, presented to delegations through short briefings. A more

elaborate presentation is the annual spring seminar at Economic Commission for Europe, where the issues examined in the ECE *Survey* are discussed. At ECA, the *Economic Report* is usually the subject of a ministerial policy debate at the biennial sessions of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic and social development and, in inter-sessional years, it is the subject of policy debate at the Ministerial follow-up to the Conference. In New York, the 1999 presentation of the *World Economic and Social Survey* included discussion of specific issues by different authors of the *Survey*. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is also making information available on the Internet (see para. 15 above). Newsletters, comparable to the IMF *Survey* written with the non-specialist in mind are well-received. *ECLAC Notes*, the newsletter prepared by the Information Services Unit of ECLAC, summarizes the main findings and conclusions of most recent relevant studies, while institutional information is kept to a minimum. Over 7,000 copies are distributed in the region to a large number of policy makers and to the specialized public.

2. Dissemination by the media

52. In the Agenda for Development (General Assembly resolution 51/240, annex, para. 272 (d)), it was stressed that any Secretariat reform in the economic and social fields should preserve and promote the independence, intellectual diversity and visibility of the United Nations in policy analysis. During the 1990s, the potential for increased visibility of the United Nations in policy analysis in the economic and social fields was actively explored by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions, in collaboration with the Department of Public Information. Press conferences for launching the economic and social surveys have been organized; information officers and staff of the substantive programmes maintain contacts with journalists. For example, for the launching of the 1998 *World Economic and Social Survey*, the Department of Public Information prepared a press summary of the *Survey* for distribution to correspondents at Headquarters and to an international list of writers on business and economics. Interviews with the main author of the *Survey* for BBC-TV's *World Business Report* and the CNN-Financial Network were aired in a large number of countries. At ECE, the authors of the *Economic Survey of Europe* have given a large number of interviews on radio and television and the *Survey* receives wide press coverage. At ESCAP, in 1999, for the launching of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, in addition to the press conference organized in Bangkok by the United Nations Information Service before the meeting of the Commission, the United Nations information centres organized press briefings in as many as 14 locations throughout the region, at which presentations were made by national experts; the total cost of these briefings is estimated at $4,000. At ESCAP, feedback on press coverage of the regional economic survey shows that broad conclusions on global trends as well as findings of interest to specific countries are usually reflected in the national press. Regional surveys, such as the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, present additional information useful to the media (see para. 36 above). Regarding the *World Economic and Social Survey*, informal feedback indicates coverage by a number of important press organs. It is also noted that news agencies increasingly file stories with mention of the *Survey* (see table 3 below). Secretariat staff commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that promotion efforts by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Public Information were a factor in this increase; attention given by the public to analysis of international economic developments that have impact on local economies played a role as well.

Table 3
Wire service stories

Referring to: *A. The World Economic and Social Survey*	*1987*[a]	*1996*	*1998*
Number of stories	1	11	20

Referring to: *B. The World Economic and Social Survey and comparators (1998 editions)*	*Number of stories*
World Economic and Social Survey	20
Trade and Development Report (UNCTAD)	9
Human Development Report (UNDP)	41
World Development Report (World Bank)	54

Source: NEXIS, an electronic database containing the wire-service stories of most news agencies worldwide.

[a] In 1987 the publication was entitled *World Economic Survey*.

53. Factors limiting wider coverage were also pointed out. Most of the surveys are perceived as background documents from which important findings do not emerge clearly. To make analyses more useful to the media, a number of companion documents, such as press summary and fact sheets, need to be prepared. Information officers in the regional commissions believe that press coverage could extend beyond the time of launching the surveys if timely updates reflecting new developments were available. Due to the limited resources available for their promotion, it is not possible to effectively launch these publications every year. The economic and social surveys are not advocacy tools, such as the global *Human Development Report*, which continues to be a successful key media and advocacy tool and benefits from the resources of the sponsoring organization, ensuring effective publicity. For example, in 1997, footage provided by the UNDP television team to programme countries for the launch of the *Human Development Report* ran in 60 countries, some of which were dubbed in local languages. Published by a commercial publisher, the *Human Development Report* print-run exceeds 100,000 copies, with about a third of it bought back for free distribution. The 1998 *World Economic and Social Survey* print-run was 7,200 copies, with about half of it set aside for free distribution. Other ways of disseminating information may help compensate for these limitations. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs web site could be used more actively to inform the international media of new publications. Networks of interested individuals who are members of associations such as the national United Nations Associations could be established to support and complement the promotional work of the United Nations information centres.

3. Reaching the professional community: development economists

54. Statistics on sales of the *World Economic and Social Survey* indicates the continued interest of the specialized public (see table 5, para. 58, below). Feedback from this public is not collected systematically. The feedback obtained by the United Nations University Press on two recent publications on the 1997-1998 financial crisis, edited by staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, indicated that the audience for these publications included a mix of scholars and researchers in international affairs and political science, as well as mid-level decision makers in international and other organizations, sometimes characterized as specialists in development economics. Staff of the regional commissions, who are more involved in technical assistance, are in a better position to assess interest in their publications, although the nature of the feedback varies. For example, at ECA, feedback is limited to the reactions of the delegates during the meetings of the Commission. At ECLAC and ECE, analysis presented in the publications is discussed in meetings and seminars attended by the professional community.

55. Staff of the regional commissions, who were interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit commented that reaching the professional community was central to ensuring the visibility of analysis disseminated by the Secretariat. Professional seminars, which are also attended well by government decision makers, provide the opportunity to discuss findings and policy options in-depth. Furthermore, researchers in this area act frequently as advisers to their own governments (see para. 34 above). Professionals belonging to this broad group of development economists and policy analysts working in international relations, when interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit, commented that summaries in the press did not help them to determine whether they might be interested in the analysis contained in the economic and social surveys. They stated that presentations at seminars are now a common practice for comparable reports, but not well established for United Nations surveys. In its comments to the Unit, ECE stated that staff accepted invitations to attend a wide range of conferences and meetings organized by academics, for example, by the European forecasting institutes. All of this activity both fed into the work of the secretariat of the Commission and led to a wider dissemination of the *Survey* and other outputs of the secretariat. As an example of outreach to the professional community by ECA, a special edition of the *Journal of African Economies*, published by Oxford University in December 1999, was devoted to ECA policy papers on the issue of development aid in Africa.

56. In recent years, staff in different parts of the Secretariat have been encouraged to participate in the activities of the professional community outside the United Nations. However, an examination of the Economic Literature Database, an index authors and publications cited in professional journals, at the end of 1999, revealed that most staff members whose writings

in professional publications were regularly cited in the Database before joining the United Nations were no longer cited afterwards. A few economists who continued to contribute are frequently cited. The lack of time for writing papers and the anonymity of writing at the United Nations are the most common reasons given to explain this lack of visibility. It should also be noted that one prerequisite for participation in professional meetings and publications is adherence to quality standards of the professional community; papers submitted for meetings go through a rigorous selection process. The referee system used in professional circles is rarely followed at the United Nations, and even less stringent quality control arrangements, such as internal peer reviews, are not the common practice. At ECLAC, the editor of the *CEPAL Review* has adopted a referee system for publishing papers submitted to the *Review*. Table 4 below gives an indication of the visibility achieved by the *Review* in professional circles, attributed in large part to the conception of the *Review* and the quality of its contents. At ESCAP, an expert group meeting provides comments on the *Economic and Social Survey* in draft form, and papers submitted for publication in the *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* are normally given to referees. ESCAP staff told the Central Evaluation Unit that a referee process is desirable, but that it relies entirely upon the good-will and availability of the referees. ECE staff stated that, based on ECE experience, the referee system is useful in the case of specialized studies. Regarding the economic analysis of current developments, where timeliness is a factor, periodic reviews by academics of work done and in progress is the best form of quality control. Regarding the promotion of sales publications (see para. 59 below), in its comments on a draft of the present report, the Department of Public Information forwarded the idea that testimonials from specialists in academic and research institutions might be gained from prominent persons. Such testimonials, quoted in the promotional literature, would be of great value in enhancing the saleability, and therefore the overall dissemination, of the publications.

Table 4
Citations of publications and articles in professional literature

A. Programme publications and comparators

Title	*Number of citations*
World Economic and Social Survey (DESA)[a]	3
United Nations regional surveys	9
Trade and Development Report (UNCTAD)	30
Human Development Report (UNDP)	26
World Development Report (World Bank)	57

B. Articles published in the CEPAL Review and by individual staff members

	Number of citations
CEPAL Review (ECLAC)	546
Individual staff members[b]	
Staff member #1	81
Staff member #2	50

Source: *Economic Literature Database*, 1969-1999.

[a] Including citations under the former title *World Economic Survey*.

[b] Staff members with the highest number of citations who continued to contribute to professional journals after joining the United Nations.

4. Free distribution and sales

57. Publications are distributed using three channels: official distribution, sales and free distribution by the substantive departments. The latter presently takes two forms: the mailing of printed material and electronic dissemination. Problems in the distribution of printed materials already identified in the previous in-depth evaluation in this area have not changed significantly. Efforts have been made to rationalize and update mailing lists, usually following requests from Member States to do so. For example, at ECLAC, the secretariat was asked to revise and update the list of recipients of its publications in order to disseminate the outputs of the work programme more effectively. Unfortunately, throughout the Secretariat, after revision of the lists, insufficient attention is given to their maintenance. Very few units operate like the Information Services Unit of ECLAC, which considers that maintaining and developing further distribution lists is an ongoing activity and acts accordingly.

58. Electronic dissemination in the economic and social fields developed considerably in recent years. In June 1998, 11,000 users accessed the ESCAP web site; in October 1999, there were 78,000 visitors to the site. Available statistics show a comparable increase at ECE and ECLAC. Statistics available for the Headquarters sites show that, between different areas of work of the Secretariat, the economic and social affairs site was, early 1999, consulted seven times more than the next most highly requested topical area, international law. A few initiatives have been launched that take the new possibilities offered by electronic communication into account. For example, ESCAP is developing a virtual conference site on the issue of environment and economic policy making. The site is conceived as a resource centre as well as a public forum to exchange ideas and good practices. The Commission commended the emphasis placed in the proposed programme of work on increasing the dissemination of information through ESCAP web sites and databases.[16] Adequate resources are not always allocated for the development and maintenance of web sites. At ESCAP, the function of web master is carried out by one officer in a substantive division, on a voluntary basis. Work on the web site pages is carried out over and above the concerned officer's official job description. In contrast, at ECLAC, two full time officers are responsible for functions that include: definition of architecture, design and graphic layout to facilitate user access and navigation; promotion of the Internet site; creation of an Intranet site understood as an experimental space to test new products and services; technical assistance to transfer the experience and knowledge to governments and regional institutions.

Table 5
United Nations publications: statistics on sales

Title	*Print-run*	*Number of copies sold*[a]
World Economic and Social Survey, 1998	7 220	2 604
Report of the World Social Situation, 1997	6 175	1 197
Trade and Development Report, 1998	11 760	1 201
Economic and Social Survey of Africa, 1995-1996[b]	2 500	210
Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1998	2 800	645
Economic Survey of Europe, 1998[c]	4 085	1 252
Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1998	2 090	873
Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA region, 1997-1998	611	160

Source: United Nations publications database.
[a] Sales as of 31 October 1999.
[b] Latest statistics available.
[c] For each of the three annual volumes.

59. In addition to issues that concern most United Nations publications (see A/52/685), the timeliness of publication was identified as a major limiting factor for the promotion of sales of the economic and social surveys. For example, although it would be possible to finalize the *World Economic and Social Survey* for sale by mid-year, to coincide with the opening of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, the *Survey* is put on the market much later, when many prospective buyers are no longer interested in the prospects of a year that has largely gone by. Another limiting factor is that the pricing is not adapted to markets in the developing countries, which explains, in part, the relatively lower sales figures of regional surveys (see table 5 above). In this regard, it should be noted that the English edition of the 1998 *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean* represented 87 per cent of sales, while the Spanish edition, aimed primarily at the Latin American market, represented only 13 per cent. Some regional commissions have explored the possibility of joint publications with regional publishers, which provide lower cost publications and access to a local network

of distribution. In one case, United Nations publications at Headquarters entered into contract with one local publisher to publish the *World Economic and Social Survey* and place it on the market, where United Nations publications have not sold well, at one quarter of the United Nations price. Several hundred copies of the local edition were sold and the publisher intends to increase the print-run. Such initiatives significantly increase the dissemination of information, which is the primary purpose of United Nations publications. In its comments to a draft of the present report, the Department of Public Information stated that a policy is in place to extend distribution through local and language editions in markets that cannot be adequately served by direct sales activities. However, in its comments, ESCAP stated that associating commercial publishers with ESCAP publications would involve a radical change in the rules and procedures governing such matters at the United Nations. The authors of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* stated that the one attempt they had made in the past failed because of the time taken by Headquarters in arriving at a decision and owing to the stringent conditions laid down for the purpose.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

60. **In the 1989 evaluation report on the global programme on development issues and policies (E/AC. 51/1989/4, paras. 91-102), it was concluded, *inter alia*, that the programme's analyses were generally of good quality, but that their dissemination through departmental mailing lists was poor and that the use made of the programme's publications by other organizations of the United Nations system, professional economists and the press was less than desirable. The prior evaluation also raised issues concerning the global programme's contributions to intergovernmental debate and its intergovernmental guidance. The conclusions and recommendations of the prior evaluation constitute a set of benchmarks against which progress can be assessed.**

61. **Ten years later, the analyses prepared at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions under the several subprogrammes reviewed remained of good quality, and were sometimes of a higher calibre. A number of activities carried out under the subprogrammes reviewed provided effective support to intergovernmental processes that led to the agreements reached during the major United Nations conferences and meetings of the 1990s. However, the recurrent publications under these subprogrammes, mainly economic and social surveys, were not a major contribution to these processes, with the exception of those regional commissions where the surveys are the basis for policy debates, either during sessions of the intergovernmental bodies or at the national level. Changes were made to the presentation and scope of the recurrent publications of the global programme. More changes are needed in the way analysis is presented and communicated to government representatives. The contents and presentation of recurrent publications of the regional commissions, where the main audience is most often in national ministries and institutions, were significantly reformulated.**

62. **Other conclusions of the 1989 in-depth evaluation are still valid. This refers, *inter alia*, to the lack of intergovernmental guidance for the global programme on development trends, issues and policies and the need for more effective arrangements to disseminate the publications and to reach the professional community. Exchange of information and collaboration between different parts of the Secretariat have improved, but need to be further developed. Efforts to increase the dissemination of analyses through the media have had positive results.**

63. **Regarding intergovernmental guidance, in the 1989 in-depth evaluation it was noted that there was no specialized intergovernmental body reviewing the programme of work on development issues and policies. The situation remains unchanged today, 10 years later: there is still no appropriate specialized intergovernmental body providing guidance on the programme planning aspects of the activities of subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends and issues. The subprogramme as proposed in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 was not reviewed by any specialized intergovernmental body. In a related matter, it is noted that, under subprogramme 28.7, substantive support is to be provided to the Committee on Development Policy, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. The arrangements for formulating the**

programme of work of the Committee and its working methods were reviewed by the Council in 1998 (see paras. 18-19 above). The effectiveness of the Committee's new working methods will need to be assessed in 2003, in the context of the triennial review of implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee on Programme and Coordination on the present in-depth evaluation.

64. Since 1989, resources provided for this area of work of the Secretariat have remained relatively stable, with the exception of resources for subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, where the staffing level is 50 per cent lower now than it was 10 years ago, and of subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis, at ECE, where the staffing level is 30 per cent lower. Considering the increased attention given by the United Nations to economic and financial matters, the Secretariat may need to examine possible measures to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for economic and social data gathering and analysis and, if required, to make proposals to the relevant intergovernmental bodies as part of revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

65. The following recommendations are based on the findings presented in sections III, IV and V of the present report.

Recommendation 1
Contribution of the *World Economic and Social Survey* to intergovernmental processes

(a) The *World Economic and Social Survey* should be more concise, highlight action-oriented findings and present clear policy proposals based on them. The *Survey* issued in the year 2001 should incorporate an executive summary containing the findings and policy proposals of part II of the *Survey*;

(b) In liaison with other parts of the Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should identify a wider range of government officials to whom the contents of the *Survey* would be of interest and should take the necessary steps to ensure that the *Survey*, in print or electronic version, either in its entirety or only the relevant sections, reaches them [see paras. 11-14 and 51 above].

Recommendation 2
Assessing long-term trends in the global economy

To facilitate intergovernmental discussion on policies conducive to long-term development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should strengthen its analysis of long-term trends in the global economy using a variety of methodological approaches and it should further integrate this dimension into its reporting to intergovernmental bodies [see para. 16 above].

Recommendation 3
Linkages between political and economic issues and policies

After intergovernmental agreement on a methodology for assessing the impact of sanctions on third States, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs should review the required activities and capacity needed within the Secretariat. The review should be the basis for proposals presented to the relevant intergovernmental bodies as part of the revision to the medium-term plan.

Recommendation 4
Analytical functions and operational activities at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

To correct the inadequate interaction between research and operational activities under subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should plan a number of joint activities between the professional staff assigned under subprogramme 28.7 and those involved in technical assistance under subprogrammes 28.3 and 28.8. Resources permitting, appropriate activities could include joint participation in the analysis of developments in national economies and joint participation in needs assessment missions [see paras. 41-42 above].

Recommendation 5
Exchange of information on socio-economic development issues, trends and policies in the Secretariat

Resources permitting, standard procedures should be adopted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions to

enhance the exchange of information and ideas on socio-economic development issues. Appropriate procedures could include requests for inputs during the planning phase of the economic and social surveys, requests for comments on preliminary drafts and a regularly updated inventory of studies and working papers completed or in preparation in the different parts of the Secretariat. The effectiveness of such procedures should be periodically reviewed by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs [see para. 44 above].

Recommendation 6
Informal network for a wider dissemination of the results of analytical work

The Secretariat should develop an informal network of experts to assist in disseminating United Nations economic and social analysis. Experts who contributed to the economic and social surveys or topical studies or who commented on preliminary drafts of the surveys should be requested to make brief presentations on specific findings of the surveys to national authorities and the press in their country of residence, and at professional meetings they attend [see paras. 52, 54, and 55 above].

Recommendation 7
Reaching the professional community

The Secretariat should endeavour to make a greater contribution to the world professional debate outside the United Nations on the issues of socio-economic development and, resources permitting, expand the good practices of a few Secretariat units, *inter alia*, by:

(a) Encouraging staff to participate in professional conferences and seminars and to make contributions to professional journals, with priority given to meetings and journals of interest to development economists and policy makers in governments;

(b) United Nations publications on economic and social development should be prepared using rigorous quality control arrangements; working papers, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs discussion paper series, should be subject to a referee system similar to that used in the professional community prior to publication [see paras. 54-56 above].

Recommendation 8
Free distribution and sales

Arrangements for the dissemination of analysis prepared for distribution in print or in electronic form should be reviewed, so that, *inter alia*:

(a) Mailing lists for free distribution are systematically derived from major categories of users (e.g. research departments in central banks, focal points in governments, national economic and social research institutes, professional journals);

(b) Mailing lists are updated regularly;

(c) Adequate resources are allocated to the development and maintenance of web sites to enhance their usefulness;

(d) Recurrent publications are released, with due attention to the calendar of intergovernmental meetings, at a time of the year when their findings are still relevant to the interested public;

(e) Sales strategies, including entering into contracts with local publishers, serve the primary purpose of the United Nations publications, which is to increase the dissemination of the United Nations perspective on issues of socio-economic development;

(f) Formal and informal feedback is used to review the effectiveness of these arrangements at regular intervals [see paras. 53 and 57-59 above].

(*Signed*) Hans **Corell**
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Overseer, Office of Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 45/199, annex, para. 104.

[2] See *World Economic and Social Survey, 1997* (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.97.II.C.1), preamble.

[3] A/54/115, sect. III, para. 5, table.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 1* (A/50/1), para. 212.

[5] A/49/336, para. 118 (c).

[6] A/53/312.

[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 1* (A/51/1), para. 252.

[8] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 18* (E/1999/38), chap. III, paras. 159-160.

[9] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 20* (E/1998/40), chap. III, para. 106.

[10] Ibid., para. 92.

[11] E/1997/5, para. 17.

[12] A/54/471, para. 1.

[13] E/1998/40, para. 76.

[14] E/AC.51/1997/2, para. 53.

[15] General Assembly resolution 51/240, annex, paras. 234 and 247.

[16] E/1999/39, para. 293.